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An Analysis of Drugs and Crime Among Arrestees in the District of Columbia

Executive Summary

a publication of the National Institute of Justice

I

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James L. Underwood
Acting Director

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II

An Analysis of Drugs and Crime Among Arrestees in the District of Columbia

Executive Summary

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December 1981

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What types of offenses are drug-using arrestees likely to be charged with? Can information about an arrestee and his or her current case predict whether the person will be detected (by urinalysis) to be using drugs? How likely are drug users to be rearrested? Do they specialize in committing particular types of crimes? Which arrestees enter treatment for drug abuse, and does treatment affect the person's subsequent criminal behavior? Are older arrestees less likely to use illicit drugs?

This summary describes a project--jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)--that constructed data files that can address these questions, as well as others pertaining to drug use and crime among a population of arrestees in Washington, D.C.* Analyses are presented that illustrate the range of issues that can be addressed using the files.**

The summary presents an overview of the project, with emphasis on the findings and recommendations. First, background information about the project is presented. Next, the constructed files are described and their

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*The full report of this study is available from the National Technical Information Service, photocopy or microfiche; the accession number is PB81220868.

**A technical discussion of the file-construction process appears in Appendix C of the full report.

potential uses and limitations noted. This is followed by a discussion of the analyses conducted, their implications, and study recommendations.

Discussions with Dr. William Pollin, Director of NIDA, following preparation of the final report, led to a set of analyses concerned with the involvement of drug users in violent crime. A report on these analyses appears as an addendum to this summary.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In 1970, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the Narcotics Treatment Administration (subsequently called the Substance Abuse Administration and currently called the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Administration, ADASA) undertook a cooperative effort to develop a system for monitoring the drug use of arrestees. The goal of the program was to obtain information about the drug status of each arrestee that could be used by a judge in determining bail or other conditions of release. Since December 1971, almost all arrestees who have been detained in the D.C. Superior Court lock-up facility prior to their court appearance have been asked to provide information about their use of drugs, prior drug treatment, and current arrest charge, and to provide a urine specimen for analysis. The District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction in the country where arrestees are routinely tested for drug use, and it therefore

provides a unique opportunity for studying the relationship of drug use and crime among arrestees.

Kozel and DuPont (1977) computerized the urinalysis information collected by the D.C. Superior Court and compared arrest charges and urine test results for 44,323 consecutive admissions to the lock-up between 1971 and 1975. Their study documented the increase in the use of phenmetrazine (Preludin) in this period and indicated that drug-using arrestees were less likely to be charged with crimes of violence than were nonusers.

In another study, Williams (1979) analyzed recidivism patterns among arrestees processed in the D.C. Superior Court during approximately the same period, January 1, 1971, to August 31, 1975. Williams used information from the Prosecutor's Management Information System (PROMIS), an automated case-tracking system that was installed in the Superior Court Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia in 1971. Williams found that, other factors being equal, persons arrested for a drug offense were more likely to recidivate if they had a prior arrest record. In addition, she found that drug use in connection with any type of arrest was a significant predictor of recidivism.

The study described here builds primarily on those projects. The data available to Kozel and DuPont contained information about the drugs detected in the arrestee's specimen, but they contained minimal information about the charges made and no information

about subsequent processing of the arrestee by the court or the final disposition of the case. The PROMIS data files used by Williams contained detailed information about charges, processing, and disposition. However, drug use by the arrestee had to be inferred from the arresting officer's perception of whether the person was involved with illicit drugs.

It became apparent that if it were possible to merge each person's PROMIS case record with the ADASA record of the person's urinalysis outcome, the resulting data base would contain a wealth of information that could be used to explore the relationship between drug use and crime among arrestees. Other than the study by Kozel and DuPont, the only other study that has used a similar approach is a study of arrestees in six cities conducted by Eckerman, et al. (1971). However, Eckerman's research excluded female arrestees and obtained information from only 1,889 arrestees. The data bases constructed in this project contain information from over 57,000 cases and constitute the most comprehensive set of information about arrestee drug use and criminal justice processing yet assembled.

Two types of data files were constructed. The first is a set of cross-sectional files composed of each case in PROMIS for which a matching urinalysis test record was located. There are 57,944 cases in the final cross-sectional files for the period from 1973 through 1977. The cross-sectional files are case based, and a

person arrested several times within this period would have multiple cases included in the file. The second type of file is a defendant-based, longitudinal file that contains the arrest records for 7,087 persons over a six-year period from 1973 through 1978. In addition to the case information from PROMIS and the matching urinalysis record, the longitudinal file contains information about time incarcerated during this period and any record of entry into treatment at an ADASA facility. Each of these data bases is discussed below.

THE CROSS-SECTIONAL DATA FILES

Cases for adults arrested for serious misdemeanors and for all felonies (in violation of the D.C. Code) brought to the Superior Court Division of the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia are routinely entered into the PROMIS case-tracking system. The PROMIS data files for 1973-1977 contain 84,917 cases. It was our goal to find the arrestee's matching urinalysis record for as many cases as possible. It was evident at the outset of this project, however, that it was not feasible to locate a urine record for every case contained in PROMIS. Agency records are often difficult to work with and information needed to link PROMIS and ADASA records might not be available or usable. More significant, not every arrestee in PROMIS should have a urinalysis record. This is because the PROMIS system contains cases for persons who are released by the police

after arrest, pending court appearance, as well as for persons who were detained in the lock-up. Persons not held in the lock-up, where ADASA staff process arrestees, would not have a record of a urinalysis test unless the judge had requested a test at a later time.

Despite these obstacles, a matching urinalysis record was found for 57,944 cases recorded in PROMIS between 1973 and 1977, 68 percent of the total, and for 90 percent of the cases in which the arrestee was detained in the lock-up. Thus, the urine record was found for the overwhelming majority of arrestees who were eligible for ADASA processing.

Once the arrestee was placed in the lock-up, there was a high probability that an ADASA record would be available regardless of the offense or the arrestee's demographic characteristics. Because persons who have criminal histories or who are charged with serious crimes are more likely to be placed in the lock-up, our resulting samples of matched cases tend to describe the more serious offenders. Analyses using the cross-sectional data files therefore apply primarily to serious offenders detained in the lock-up and not to persons who are typically released after arrest by the police. The sex, race, and age distributions for arrestees in these cases for each year from 1973 through 1977 are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. SEX, RACE, AND AGE OF ARRESTEES IN CROSS-SECTIONAL CASE FILES, 1973-1977†

	Year of Case									
	1973		1974		1975		1976		1977	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sex:										
Male	9,113	87	8,928	88	10,628	86	9,977	83	9,796	80
Female	1,386	13	1,205	12	1,705	14	1,986	17	2,473	20
	10,499	100%	10,133	100%	12,333	100%	11,963	100%	12,269	100%
Race/Sex:										
Black Males	8,245	79 >90%	8,091	80 >90%	9,629	78 >89%	8,845	74 >88%	8,828	72 >89%
Black Females	1,137	11	1,032	10	1,410	11	1,656	14	2,052	17
White Males	665	6 > 8%	719	7 > 9%	825	7 > 9%	951	8 >10%	737	6 > 9%
White Females	204	2	152	2	274	2	286	2	367	3
Race Unknown	248	2	139	1	195	2	225	2	285	2
	10,499	100%	10,133	100%	12,333	100%	11,963	100%	12,260	100%
Age at Arrest:										
Below 18	143	1	148	1	125	1	106	1	89	1
18-20	2,290	22	2,213	22	2,698	22	2,519	21	2,613	21
21-25	3,307	32	3,144	31	3,810	31	3,572	30	3,715	30
26-30	1,762	17	1,815	18	2,256	18	2,296	19	2,596	21
31-45	2,145	20	2,053	20	2,533	20	2,506	2	2,317	20
46+	749	7	674	7	780	7	855	7	825	7
No Information	103	1	86	1	131	1	109	1	114	1
	10,499	100%	10,133	100%	12,333	100%	11,963	100%	12,269	101%[a]

†Includes all cases in PROMIS matched to an ADASA urine record, provided the test was requested within seven days of arrest or papering (screening). Results may not be indicative of all persons arrested in the District of Columbia in these years. Persons with multiple cases in a year are represented once for each case in which they were involved.

[a]Percents may not total to 100 due to rounding.

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THE LONGITUDINAL DATA FILE

The longitudinal file was constructed so that information about a person's arrests, drug use, and drug treatment could be tracked over a six-year period. The file contains information about 7,087 persons whose cases were screened by an Assistant U.S. Attorney on one of 139 days selected from an eight-month panel period (August 21, 1974, through April 30, 1975). The first case for a person during this panel period was designated as that person's panel case. For each person, a maximum of seven cases that occurred prior to his or her panel arrest (called "pre-panel cases") back through January 1, 1973, and a maximum of ten post-panel cases through December 31, 1978, were retained in the file. The final file contains 19,277 cases involving the 7,087 panel defendants in the PROMIS system over the six-year period. Along with the case information from PROMIS, the final file contains information about time incarcerated, drug use at arrest, and any record of having sought or received treatment at an ADASA clinic during this period. (A treatment intake record was found for 812 panel members, 11 percent of the sample.) Table 2 summarizes the components of the longitudinal file.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA FILES

Studies of deviant behavior are prone to a number of methodological difficulties. Perhaps the most serious one is the tendency for persons to conceal their

Table 2. COMPONENTS OF LONGITUDINAL FILE

Pre-panel Cases (back through 1/1/73) N = 3,865	Panel Cases (8/21/74-4/30/75) N = 7,087	Post-panel Cases (through 12/31/78) N = 8,325
PROMIS Data	PROMIS Data	PROMIS Data
Urinalysis Results	Urinalysis Results	Urinalysis Results
Treatment Data	B + S Data*	B + S Data*
	Treatment Data	Treatment Data

*Bail and sentencing information: time incarcerated while awaiting trial or after conviction

involvement in illicit drug use or criminal behavior. Interview studies often attempt to validate a respondent's self-reports by comparing them with official arrest records or with a urinalysis of a specimen obtained at the end of the interview. An advantage of the present study was that the primary information was based on official arrest records and urinalysis test results.

Although the availability of arrest records and urinalysis test results for a large sample of arrestees adds an unusual dimension of objectivity to this project, a number of potential limitations should be noted. These include the fact that urinalysis tests necessarily involve some degree of error. Some persons' drug use will fail to be detected (false-negative), and other

persons who did not use illegal drugs will sometimes have a positive test result (false-positive), sometimes because they have been using licit drugs. Detection of differences between drug-positive arrestees and drug-negative arrestees is therefore more difficult because the negative group contains some persons whose drug use went undetected, and the positive group probably includes some persons who did not use illicit drugs. It should be emphasized that when differences are found between drug-positive and drug-negative arrestees they probably are significant, because they appeared despite these potential errors in classification.

Because the study findings are based on arrestees, they should not be considered necessarily descriptive of those drug users who are <u>not</u> arrested, nor of the total user population, but only of the arrestee population.

Finally, findings regarding likelihood of rearrest and of entering treatment may be limited by the fact that the files contain arrest records for only cases that were processed in the D.C. Superior Court and treatment information for only persons who entered one of ADASA's clinics. These limitations signify that we will tend to underestimate the true likelihood of recidivism and treatment for drug abuse among our sample members, because some persons will have been arrested or sought treatment outside of the District of Columbia.

OVERVIEW OF ANALYSES: CROSS-SECTIONAL FILES

Most of the analyses to be presented here utilized cases from 1973 and 1974. These years were chosen because the PROMIS data files for those years contain information that was not available for later years. In addition, these years had higher proportions of drug-positive arrestees for study than did later years.

The urinalysis tests that were conducted were capable of detecting nine substances (morphine, quinine, methadone, phenmetrazine, codeine, cocaine, amphetamines, methamphetamines and barbiturates). Morphine and/or quinine are used as surrogates for heroin, since heroin is rapidly metabolized into morphine, and heroin is usually adulterated with quinine in the District of Columbia.

In the analyses to be presented, detection of <u>any</u> of these substances constitutes a drug-positive (D+) urine test result; a drug-negative (D-) result indicates that the urinalysis did not detect any of these substances. In actuality, however, most of the positive results were caused by the presence of morphine, quinine, methadone, or phenmetrazine. Phenmetrazine, or Preludin, is a stimulant that is often abused by addicts in the District of Columbia.

Below are some of the questions addressed using the cross-sectional files for 1973 and 1974.

Do the age and sex of the arrestee predict drug status?

Table 3 presents the proportion of tested specimens from male and female arrestees that were positive, by age at arrest. Arrestees below age 21 were relatively unlikely to have been found to be using drugs. Arrestees between the ages of 21 and 45 had the greatest risk of detection, with a marked decline beginning in persons over age 30. Persons over age 45 were relatively unlikely to be found to be using drugs. Unfortunately, we cannot tell from our data whether this is evidence for a "maturing out" phenomenon.

Table 3. ARRESTEE AGE AND SEX AS PREDICTORS OF A POSITIVE URINALYSIS RESULT
(tested specimens from 1973-1974)

Age At Arrest	Percent of Cases in Which Specimen Was D+			
	Male Arrestees		Female Arrestees	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
18-20	(3,372)	16	(507)	18
21-25	(4,707)	24	(886)	25
26-30	(2,700)	25	(393)	40
31-45	(3,279)	20	(386)	22
46+	(1,144)	8	(109)	6

Table 3 also shows that female arrestees were more likely to be found to be using drugs than were male arrestees. Overall, 24 percent of the specimens from female arrestees were positive, compared with 20 percent of those from males. We are unsure of the reason behind

this finding. One possibility is that because females are less likely to be arrested, those who are arrested are more deviant and therefore more likely to be using illicit drugs. It is also possible, however, that females are more likely to be using prescribed drugs and these are being detected by the urinalysis test. A recent test of the feasibility of urinalysis screening in jail populations (Richardson, et al., 1978) also found more drug use among female arrestees than among male arrestees.

Is the offense charged related to arrestee drug status?

Table 4 shows how the offense charged was related to the likelihood that the arrestee was detected to be using drugs. Not surprisingly, persons charged with a drug-related offense were relatively likely to be detected to be drug positive. Twenty-six percent of male arrestees and 41 percent of female arrestees with a drug charge were D+, compared with 20 percent and 24 percent of arrestees, male and female respectively, from all cases. It was somewhat surprising, however, to find that persons charged with violating bail conditions were even more likely to be detected to be using drugs. This would tend to substantiate the urine testing program's function of providing judges with information useful for setting conditions for pretrial release. Arrestees charged with crimes against persons, particularly assault, were least likely to be found to be using drugs. These results

Table 4. WHAT CHARGES WERE MOST LIKELY TO INDICATE A POSITIVE TEST RESULT?
(n=17,745 cases from 1973-1974 with a urine test result)

Maximum Offense Charged	Persons With This Charge Who Were D+[a]			
	Cases of Males (n)	(%)	Cases of Females (n)	(%)
Bail Violation	(849)	27	(139)	45
Larceny	(2,359)	27	(274)	30
Drug Offense	(1,249)	26	(142)	41
Weapons Offense	(849)	24	(71)	30
Robbery	(2,209)	22	(149)	29
Fraud/Embezzlement	(486)	22	(143)	24
Consensual Sex	(363)	20	(656)	24
Burglary	(2,160)	20	(103)	15
Auto Theft	(602)	18	(45)	29
Homicide	(285)	18	(58)	19
Arson/Property Destruction	(314)	14	(23)	4
Gambling	(51)	14	(5)	b
Simple Assault	(584)	13	(32)	16
Aggravated Assault	(2,253)	10	(424)	12
Sexual Assault	(568)	9	(2)	b
Other Offense	(256)	18	(42)	14
All Cases	(15,437)	20%	(2,308)	24%

[a]Offenses above or within dotted lines had a rate of drug positives that was higher than the expected rate based on all cases.

[b]Less than 1 percent.

replicate those from prior studies of arrestee populations (Eckerman, et al., 1971; Kozel and DuPont, 1977) that indicate that drug-using arrestees are likely to be charged with crimes that seek monetary gain, rather than crimes designed to injure another person. (See the addendum to this report for analyses that shed light on this issue.)

Do pretrial release conditions and case dispositions for drug-positive arrestees differ from those for drug-negative arrestees?

Cases of D+ and D- arrestees were about equally likely to be accepted for prosecution. However, once the case was accepted, the typical D+ arrestee was less likely to be released on personal recognizance and more likely to be released to the custody of a third party or to be required to post a cash or surety bond. These findings suggest that the court is using the urinalysis results to determine whether a defendant is at high risk of failing to appear in court.

Cases of D+ arrestees were less likely to be dismissed and more likely to end in a guilty verdict or plea. It should be noted, however, that any of these findings could be caused by the more deviant backgrounds found for D+ arrestees rather than by their drug status.

Is the arrestee's drug status related to the victim's age?

Information contained in PROMIS about the victim permitted several analyses to determine whether the arrestee's drug status was associated with the age of the

victim. The findings consistently indicated that D+ arrestees were about as likely to be charged with crimes against the elderly as were D- arrestees, and that they were less likely to be charged with crimes involving victims below age 18.

Are drug-positive female arrestees primarily charged with prostitution?

There is growing evidence that female addicts are not solely involved in prostitution and that they are becoming involved in all types of crimes. A number of the findings from this study also suggest that this may be true. For example, a charge for prostitution was related to an increased likelihood of drug detection, but only among the minority of female arrestees age 26 or older. Moreover, no more than one-half of the charges involving D+ female arrestees were for prostitution or a drug-related offense. Instead, with advancing age, D+ female arrestees (and D- female arrestees to a greater extent) were increasingly likely to be charged with aggravated assault.

OVERVIEW OF ANALYSES: LONGITUDINAL DATA FILE

The longitudinal file makes it possible to examine questions regarding each person's pattern of arrests, involvement of drugs at each arrest, and the possible impact of treatment upon the person's criminal career. Below are findings relevant to some of these issues.

At what age do arrestees typically seek treatment for the first time?

Of the 812 persons (out of 7,087 in the file) processed by the ADASA Intake Unit, 62 percent first sought admission between the ages of 21 and 30. This was also the age range that was associated with the highest likelihood that an arrestee was detected to be a drug user.

Does drug status at the panel arrest predict rearrest?

Table 5 shows that persons detected to be drug positive at the time of their panel arrest were more likely to be rearrested during the post-panel period than were persons who were drug negative. (Results are presented only for panel members for whom a matching urinalysis record was found and for whom a positive or negative result was recorded.) Not only did drug status predict the likelihood of any subsequent arrest, it

Table 5. DOES DRUG STATUS AT PANEL ARREST PREDICT REARREST?

No. Of Post-Panel Arrests	Drug Status At Panel Arrest	
	D+ (N=670) %	D- (N=3,312) %
None	35	50
1	20	21
2	14	12
3+	30*	18*

*p<.001

predicted those who would have multiple rearrests. Thirty percent of D+ arrestees had three or more subsequent arrests, compared with 18 percent of D- arrestees ($p<.001$).

Is drug status at the panel arrest associated with drug status at another arrest?

Persons who were detected to be using drugs at the time of their panel arrest were more likely to have a subsequent arrest. Was it likely that these persons were using drugs at the time of another arrest? (See Table 6.)

Persons who were drug positive at their panel arrest had about a 50 percent likelihood of being found positive at the time of an immediately prior arrest or at their next arrest. Between 15 percent and 21 percent of the persons who were drug negative at the time of their panel arrest were found to be using drugs at another arrest. Thus, persons who are D+ at arrest are more likely to have additional arrests and to be found to be using drugs at the time of each arrest.

Table 6. IS DRUG STATUS AT PANEL ARREST RELATED TO DRUG STATUS AT PRIOR ARREST OR REARREST?

	Drug Status At Panel Arrest			
	D+		D-	
Found Positive	(N)	%	(N)	%
At preceding arrest	(220)	51*	(732)	21*
At next arrest	(273)	49*	(1,078)	15*

*$p<.001$

Do drug users specialize in particular types of crimes?

Persons who were drug negative at the time of their panel arrest and who were rearrested were most likely to be charged with the same types of offenses with which they were charged at the panel arrest. However, persons who were drug positive at their panel arrest were most likely to be charged with a property crime at rearrest, regardless of the type of offense charged at the panel arrest. This suggests a greater degree of specialization in property crimes among drug-using arrestees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the limitations of method and scope indicated above, the findings warrant the following recommendations:

. A urinalysis program designed to screen arrestees for drug use can be an effective tool for providing information relevant to the pretrial release decision. A high proportion of the male and female arrestees charged with violation of their conditions of bail were drug users. This would suggest that judges should have information on the arrestee's drug status to guide their decisions as to the release conditions necessary to ensure the arrestee's appearance in court.

. A urinalysis monitoring system can also be valuable in showing trends in the use of specific drugs in the community. Our data confirmed the rising trend in the use of phenmetrazine in the District of Columbia. A

feasibility study of the implementation of urine-screening programs in other jurisdictions (Richardson, et al., 1978) has also confirmed the value of such programs for detecting abuse of drugs not detected by other drug abuse monitoring systems. Identifying drug-use patterns in the community can assist law enforcement agencies in targeting the production and distribution of the drugs abused.

- Female arrestees were more likely to be detected to be using drugs than were male arrestees. In addition, drug-using females were charged with the same types of offenses as were drug-using males. Prostitution and drug use accounted for only a portion of the offenses charged for drug-using female arrestees (50 percent or less, depending on the arrestee's age). The reasons for the greater apparent prevalence of drug use among female arrestees are unknown. Since females are less likely to be arrested, it may be that those who are arrested are more deviant and, hence, more likely to be using drugs. It is also possible, however, that the urine test is picking up an increased use of legally prescribed, opiate-containing drugs by females. These findings suggest that urinalysis screening programs should not omit females from testing. Moreover, additional studies of drug use among female arrestees should be undertaken to uncover the reasons behind our findings.

. Drug-using arrestees do not appear to be more likely to be charged with crimes against the elderly. Programs designed to prevent crimes against the elderly should not focus primarily on drug users.

. Drug users are recidivistic and tend to be using drugs at the time of their rearrest. Although no findings can prove that drug use causes crime, the findings suggest that it is reasonable for crime prevention and rehabilitation programs to concentrate on persons known to be using hard drugs.

. Drug-using arrestees were primarily between the ages of 21 and 30. This was also the age range in which persons were most likely to seek treatment for the first time. Drug abuse prevention programs might therefore focus on persons arrested prior to age 21, and rehabilitation efforts might better focus on arrestees 21 to 30. Drug use was less likely to be found among older arrestees. A sample of older arrestees should probably be interviewed in order to ascertain whether these persons once used drugs and, if so, the reasons behind their apparent abstinence.

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ADDENDUM

During a presentation on the findings of this project, Dr. William Pollin, Director of NIDA, expressed interest in obtaining estimates of the criminal activity of drug users that could be compared with the estimates reported by Ball, et al. (1980). William Hamilton, President of INSLAW, Inc., gave his enthusiastic support to additional analyses of the longitudinal data file. These analyses, presented below, provide new information on the involvement of drug-using arrestees in violent crimes. (See also Wish, 1981.)

Two recent studies based on self-reports have received much attention (Ball, et al., 1980; Inciardi, 1979). Both studies asked persons to report their drug use and criminal activities over a period of time. Both found considerable involvement of heroin users in a multitude of criminal activities, usually property crimes designed to provide money for buying drugs. Of special note is Ball's finding that drug users reported committing six times as many crimes during periods of regular drug use as during periods of lesser use.

Both of these studies contribute to our knowledge about drug use and crime. Two limitations must be noted, however. First, like all studies, the findings are dependent on the nature of the sample of persons that was selected. Studies of persons on the street are informative, but there is usually no way of knowing how

representative the findings are of all addicts or even of all persons in that locality. Second, it is not possible to know how much of the findings reported above are the result of the addict's belief that he is expected to report more crime during periods of drug use. The addict is subject to the same stereotypes of junkies as everyone else!

By drawing a random sample of arrestees in the District of Columbia from our longitudinal data file containing arrest information and urinalysis test results over a six-year period, we were able to estimate the number and types of arrests experienced by persons who were or were not found to be using drugs near the time of arrest. Because our estimates are based on arrest records, it is probable, however, that our findings underestimate the true number of crimes committed by drug users.

Number of arrests of drug users and nonusers. The table on the next page shows the number of arrests that drug users and non-users had during the six years. A D+ arrestee is a person who had a positive urine test result at at least one of his or her arrests. Persons classified as D- had at least one test result available, but it was never positive.

It is clear that persons found to be using drugs were more likely to be rearrested than were persons who never had a positive test result. Drug-positive arrestees had an average of 4.85 arrests during the six years, compared

DO DRUG USERS HAVE MORE ARRESTS THAN NON-USERS?
(N = 7,087 persons)

	Drug Status of Arrestee*			
	D+	D-	Refused	No Test Available
Number of Arrests During the Six-Year Period	(1,491)	(3,572)	(469)	(1,555)
1	10	37	63	86
2	14	24	25	11
3	15	16	7	2
4+	61	23	5	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mean number of arrests	4.85	2.65	1.58	1.17

*Based on all test results available from all arrests during the six-year period. A person positive at any arrest is designated D+.

with 2.65 arrests for D- arrestees. These findings are consistent with Ball's report that persons committed more crimes during periods of drug use. Clearly, persons detected to be using hard drugs near the time of arrest are recidivists. (It was possible that this finding was caused by the fact that persons with multiple arrests had more opportunity to be tested and found positive than persons with fewer arrests. We therefore repeated our analyses, controlling on the number of test results available for a person, and still found the relationship between drug use and multiple arrests.) If drug users do

indeed have a greater number of arrests, what offenses are they being charged with?

Arrest charges of drug users and nonusers. The 1,491 D+ arrestees had a total of 7,236 arrests in the six-year period, compared with 9,479 arrests for the 3,572 D- arrestees. Similar to the findings reported by prior investigators, we found that drug users were most likely to be charged with larceny offenses (23 percent of their arrests), followed by burglary (14 percent), drug offenses (13 percent), robberies (12 percent), and bail violations (8 percent). These charges accounted for 70 percent of the arrests for D+ arrestees, but only 59 percent of the arrests for the D- arrestees. The major difference in the distribution of arrest charges between the two groups was in the occurrence of assault charges, which were less common among D+ arrestees. These findings initially appeared to confirm prior studies (including the results presented in our full report) that indicated that drug users are relatively less likely to be involved in violent crimes against persons than are persons who do not use drugs.

Fortunately, however, the longitudinal file permitted us to look at all of the arrest charges for these persons over the six-year period. We computed rates of arrest for each offense for drug users and non-users during this period. These appear in the table on the next page.

RATES OF ARREST FOR EACH OFFENSE FOR DRUG USERS AND NONUSERS DURING THE SIX-YEAR STUDY PERIOD
(rate per 100 arrestees)

Offense Charged	Drug Users*	Nonusers
Larceny	112.6	42.1
Burglary	66.1	36.4
Drug Offense	61.9	24.4
Robbery	57.1	34.4
Bail Violation	41.0	17.8
Assault	35.6	38.2
Consensual Sex	35.5	17.3
Weapons Offense	19.7	12.6
Fraud	13.5	9.0
Auto Theft	11.7	7.6
Arson	5.9	6.0
Sexual Assault	5.6	5.1
Homicide	4.5	4.6
Gambling	a	1.3
Other Offense	8.9	5.3
Missing	5.2	2.3
Total	485.3	265.4

*A drug user is any person who had a positive urinalysis test result at any arrest during this period.

[a]Less than 1 per 100 arrestees.

A "typical" group of 100 D+ arrestees had 465 arrests during the six years; D- arrestees had 265 arrests. As expected, D+ arrestees were much more likely to be charged with larceny offenses than D- arrestees; a typical 100 D+ arrestees had about 112 arrests for larceny in the six years, compared with 42 such arrests for D- arrestees. Among drug positive arrestees, arrest rates for burglary, drug offenses, robbery, and bail violation were all two-to-three times that of D-

arrestees. The important point to note, however, is that drug users were arrested for violent crimes (assault, homicide) at about the same rate as nonusers. (In fact, D+ arrestees had a higher rate of arrest for weapons offenses, indicating a greater potential for violent behavior.) Violent crimes represent a smaller proportion of the total number of arrests for D+ arrestees only because they have so many arrests for property offenses.

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